

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-07-12
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BLM Looking for Help in Designing Public Involvement Tools

PORTLAND – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is asking for help in designing effective ways to involve the public in making plans for the future management of 2.5 million acres of public lands in western Oregon. The BLM is currently revising all of its resource management plans in areas covered in Oregon by the Northwest Forest Plan. These resource management plans have guided BLM's management since 1995.

"We're in the midst of a plan revision process to set the future course of the BLM-managed lands in western Oregon. The BLM has been unable to deliver on one of the primary goals of the Northwest Forest Plan – to maintain a steady and predictable flow of forest products to local communities. This process is about exploring new approaches to providing for the social and ecological demands on these forests while at the same time meeting our legal obligations for permanent forest production," said Ed Shepard, BLM's new State Director for Washington and Oregon.

In June of this year, a draft plan and environmental impact statement will be released for three months of public review and comment. Two public forums have been scheduled in February to review new web-based tools and methods for helping the public review and comment on the draft documents. One forum will be held in Salem on February 6 and the other in Medford on February 9, 2007.

"For the last year and a half, we have engaged the public in a detailed dialogue about options for future management," said Oregon/Washington BLM State Director Ed Shepard. "We've worked closely with the public and cooperating agencies to identify a range of management alternatives, and we're currently determining the environmental, economic, and social impacts of each of those alternatives. In June we'll be asking the public to review our analysis of potential impacts under each of the various management alternatives. We're hoping these new tools will help interested individuals and groups get to the important details in the analysis and make it easy for them to provide input that will be useful in making final decisions."

The workshops will begin at 9:00 a.m. and run until about 4:30 p.m. The Salem workshop will be held at the BLM Salem Office at 1717 Fabry Road Southeast. The Medford workshop will also be held at the local BLM Medford Office located at 3040 Biddle Road.

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More information about the workshops can be obtained from the BLM's Western Oregon Planning office at: (503) 808-6629 or e-mail: orwopr@or.blm.gov, or on the internet at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr>

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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